Secta. II–37—100,000—21-8-48.

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G.O. No. 221 P 4

Dated 25 1 49

[Despatch Abstract.]

Legislative Assembly Question - Appoints ... women as Lay Secretaries - Treasures in Medical Institutions - Papers Recorded.

Extract of Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly held on 21-8-48.

The Post of Lay Secretary and Treasurer in Government Medical Institution.

*129 Q.- BEGUM SULTAN MIR AMIRUDDIN: Will the Hon. the Minister for Public Health be pleased to state --

(a) whether the post of Lay Secretary and Tresurer in Government Medical institutions is not open to women; and

(b) if the answer is in the affirmative, the reasons therefor ?

THE HON. SRI A.B.SHETTY: - "(a) Yes, the post is not open to women.

*(b) It has been considered that the duties attached to the post are such that they cannot be satisfactory performed by women."(Laughter).

BEGUM SULTAN MIR AMIRUDDIN: - " May I enquine how the Hon. Minister can pass such a sweeping remark as to state that the ~~duie~~ duties of the Lay Secretary and Treasurer in Government Medical institution cannot be discharged by women ? This is a slur on womanhood as a whole. Is it not a fact, Sir, that women have proved fit for more difficult posts than this ?"

THE HON. SRI A.B.SHETTY:- " In 1941, Sir, the Surgeon-General said that women would not be suitable for the posts on account of the onerous duties attached to the posts."

BEGUM SULTAN MIR AMIRUDDIN: - " Is the Hon. Minister aware, Sir, that we are living in 1948 and not in 1941 and that it is against the letter and the spirit of the Draft Constitution of Independent India that women should be excluded from any such posts ? Will the Government therefore revise their rule and throw open the posts to women?

THE HON. SRI A.B.SHETTY: - " As far as women's fitness for posts ingeneral is concerned this Government are holding quite progressive views. But with regard to this particular post in which they may have to do many duties of a very arduous nature, even subsequent to 1941 the Surgeon-General has expressed a similar opinion and it has been held that it would not be advisable to appoint women for these posts."

BEGUM SULTAN MIR AMIRUDDIN: - " Is the Hon. Minister aware that after the Draft Constitution is adopted by the Constitment Assembly in October next this Government will be compelled to expunge all such rules from their books ?"

THE HON. SRI A.B.SHETTY: - " If it becomes necessary we shall consider that, Sir."(Laughter

BEGUM SULTAN MIR AMIRUDDIN:- " Will this Government follow the example of the Central Government and e even from now implement the letter and spirit of the Draft Constitution and to justice to womanhood ?"

THE HON. SRI A.B.SHETTY: ~~X~~ - "I do not think the Central Government have opened all posts for women Sir."

Cont.

N. MUHAMMAD ANWAR SAHIB BAHADUR: - "The Hon. Minister said, Sir, that this Government hold progressive views with regard to the appointment of women. But does the Hon. Minister know that only a few months back there was a report in the Press in South India that this Government of all Governments in India did not hold such progressive views with regard to the appointment of women to administrative services and that was the regret of the Government of India ?"

THE HON. SRI A.B.SHETTY: - " I am not aware of any such comment, Sir."

SRI V.M. RAMASWAMI MUDALIYAR:- " Will the Hon. Minister be pleased to state what are the duties and responsibilities which are prescribed for the Lay Secretaries of hospitals that are considered to be not perfomrable by qualified women applicants ?

THE HON. SRI A.B. SHETTY: - "The Lay Secretaries have to be in entire charge of the clerical establishment and the menials. They have to be respobsible for th maintenance of all accounts relating to cash transactions and stock accounts of stores. They have to perform many other duties. It was held by the Surgeon-General that even in regard to the clerical posts in hospitals women have not been found quite competent for work, for they often report sick and they take leave and they do not show sufficient initiative. Therefore he has suggested that even in Women's hospitals women should not be appointed as clerks. That is the experience of an administrative officer, Sir, who is the head of the Medical Department."

SRI T. S. PATTABHIRAMAN: - " Is it a fact, Sir, that even when a Lady Member was in charge of Public Health in this Government, it was not considered advisable to appoint women for these posts ? "

THE HON. SRI A. B. SHETTY:- "This question was considered, Sir, when Mrs. Lakshmipathi was in charge of this portfolio and she also held the same view." (Laughter)

SRI B.S. MURTHI: " When I previously put a question Sir, the Hon. Minister in charge of Public Health promised not to use the word 'Menial'. Now in this connexion he has used the word 'm enial'. May I know whther he willdesist from using the word 'menial' hereafter ?"

THE HON. SRI B. GOPALA REDDI: - " What is the alternative ?"

SRI B.S. MURTHI: - " Inferior, Sir."

M.MUHAMMAD ISMAIL SAHIB BAHADUR: - " I want to know, Sir, whether the Surgeon-General was of the view that unmarried women equally with married women were unsuitable for posts under reference ?"

THE HON. SRI A.B.SHETTY: - " There is no such distinction made between married and unmarried women, Sir."

DR. S. SUBRAHMANYA AYYAR: - " Is not the Surgeon-General who is the head of the Medical department and who comes in contact with lady doctors and lady students more competent to assess the value of ladies for appointment in these posts than other Heads of Departments who go in for lady clerks and other lady staff ?"

THE HON. SRI A. B. SHETTY: - " I should think so, Si

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BEGUM SULTAN MIR AMIRUDDIN: - " Is the Hon. Minister aware that since his remarks are hurled against womanhood as a whole and not against particular individuals they are resented by the women of this Province ? Even on the last occasion when the Hon. Minister made such remarks many meetings were held and resolutions were passed. May I therefore request the Hon. Minister to withdraw his remarks against womanhood ? He can say what he likes against particular individuals but will he withdraw his remarks against womanhood as a whole ?

THE HON. SRI . A.B.SHETTY: - " I have not made any remarks against womanhood as a whole, Sir. I have only quoted the opinion of the Surgeon-General with regard to the competence of women for holding this particular post." (laughter)

SRI V.I.MUNISWAMI PILLAY: - " In view of the progress made by women after 1941 will the Government consider the desirability of consulting the Surgeon-General again to know whether ladies are fit for these posts just now ? "

THE HON. SRI S.B.SHETTY: - " I am quite willing to consult the Surgeon-General again, Sir."

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Please see the extract of proceedings of the Legislative Assembly on page 7-8 c.f. Withe reference to "A" on page 8 c.f. a draft Memo to the Surgeon-General is submitted for approval.

Sd./x x x x x x x x x x
20-1-49.

No further action seems necessary. The papers may be Recorded.

Sd./ x x x x x x x x
24-1-49.

G.O.Ms.No.221 P.H. dated 25-1-49.

Lagislative Assembly Question -
Appointment of women as Lay Secretaries Treasurers in Medical institutions - Papers Recorded.

/True copy/

Office Assistant,
Madras Record Office.

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